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ABSTRACT

This report summarizes academic assessment data for Las Cruces (New Mexico) Public Schools bilingual students in 1996-97. It has eight sections: (1) results of the Iowa Test of Basic Skills for third, fifth, and eighth grade students; (2) results of the La Prueba tests for grades three, five, and eight; (3) results of the New Mexico High School Competency Examination for grades nine through twelve; (4) results of the New Mexico Portfolio Writing Assessment for grades four and six; (5) reading assessment results for grades one and two; (6) information regarding retention rate for bilingual students in comparison with other students; (7) grade point averages of bilingual students in comparison with others; and (8) discussion of the preparation of teachers endorsed in bilingual education to meet bilingual students' needs. Conclusions are drawn and recommendations made in each area. (MSE)

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LAS CRUCES PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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February 1998

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"The Las Cruces Public Schools' community is committed to an environment in which the district's children will have an education resulting in greater student performance, higher self-esteem, and respect for others."

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1996-97 ACADEMIC ASSESSMENT FOR BILINGUAL PROGRAM 1

IOWA TEST OF BASIC SKILLS (ITBS) 1

SUMMARY REPORT FOR ITBS 2

LA PRUEBA DE REALIZACION 5

SUMMARY REPORT FOR LA PRUEBA 5

NEW MEXICO HIGH SCHOOL COMPETENT EXAMINATION (NMHSCE) 7

SUMMARY REPORT ON NMHSCE 7

NEW MEXICO PORTFOLIO WRITING ASSESSMENT 8

ASSESSMENT PROCESS 8

HOLISTIC SCORING 9

INTERPRETATION OF HOLISTIC SCORES 9

SUMMARY REPORT FOR PORTFOLIO WRITING ASSESSMENT 10

FIRST AND SECOND GRADE READING ASSESSMENT 12

INFORMAL READING ASSESSMENT (IRA) 12

ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES 13

State Essential Competencies for 1st Grade 13

State Essential Competencies for 2nd Grade 13

STATE DEVELOPMENTAL READING SCALE 14

SUMMARY REPORT ON READING ASSESSMENT 14

RETENTION RATE OF BILINGUAL STUDENTS 16

GRADE POINT AVERAGE OF BILINGUAL STUDENTS 17

PREPARATION OF BILINGUAL TEACHERS 18

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS 23

Figure 1: 1996-97 ITBS Mean Composite Score of 3rd Grade Bilingual Students Compared to 3rd Grade Regular Students 2

2: 1996-97 ITBS Mean Composite Score of 5th Grade Bilingual Students Compared to 5th Grade Regular Students 3

3: 1996-97 ITBS Mean Composite Score of 8th Grade Bilingual Students Compared to 8th Grade Regular Students 4

4: Mean NCEs of La Prueba Subtests for 1996-97 3rd Grade Bilingual Students 5

5: Mean NCEs of La Prueba Subtests for 1996-97 5th Grade Bilingual Students 5

6: Mean NCEs of La Prueba Subtests for 1996-97 8th Grade Bilingual Students 6

7: Percentage of 1996-97 Tenth Grade Bilingual and Regular Students Passed All Six Subtests in the First Attempt 8

8: Distribution of Holistic Scores for 1996-97 Fourth Grade Bilingual Students Compared to Fourth Grade Regular Students 11

9: Distribution of Holistic Scores for 1996-97 Sixth Grade Bilingual Students Compared to Fourth Grade Regular Students 11

10: Percentage of 1996-97 **First** Grade Bilingual and Regular Students Who Were Rated Emergent, Proficient and Advanced Readers 15

11: Percentage of 1996-97 **Second** Grade Bilingual and Regular Students Who Were Rated Emergent, Proficient and Advanced Readers 15

12: Retention Rate of Bilingual Students Compared to Regular Students 16

13: Grade Point Average of Bilingual Students Compared to Regular Students 17

14: Number of District's Teachers and Proportion of Teachers Endorsed in Bilingual Education 18

15: Ratio of Teachers Endorsed in Bilingual Education to Bilingual Students (1993-94 to 1996-97 School Years) 19

16: Ratio of Teachers Endorsed in Bilingual Education to Bilingual Students By Level, 1996-97 School Year 20

Table 1: Number of 1996-97 Bilingual and Regular Students at Each Grade Who Were Retained 17

1996-97 ACADEMIC ASSESSMENT FOR BILINGUAL PROGRAM

LAS CRUCES PUBLIC SCHOOLS

This report presents the summary of the academic assessment for 1996-97 bilingual students. The summary report consists of eight sections. Section one presents the results of the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) for third, fifth, and eighth grade students. The summary of the results for the La Prueba tests by grades 3, 5, and 8 are presented in section two. The third section summarizes the results of the New Mexico High School Competency Examination for grades 9-12. Section four discusses the results of the New Mexico Portfolio Writing Assessment for grades 4 and 6. Section five presents the results of reading assessment for first and second grade students. Section six provides information regarding the retention rate of bilingual students in comparison to regular students. Section seven summarizes the grade point average (GPA) of bilingual students in grades 6-12 in comparison to regular students. The last section discusses the preparation of bilingually endorsed teachers to meet the needs of bilingual students in the district.

IOWA TEST OF BASIC SKILLS (ITBS)

In the 1996-97 school year, the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) Form K, a normed referenced test, was used to assess 3rd, 5th, and 8th grade students' academic achievement. It is mandatory by the New Mexico State Department of Education that all students in these grades including Bilingual students' academic achievement be measured by this instrument. Bilingual students whose primary language proficiency is superior to their English proficiency may be recommended by the teacher(s) to take the La Prueba Test. The required components of the ITBS, reading and mathematics, are comprised of spelling, vocabulary, reading comprehension, math concepts and estimation, math problems and data interpretation, and math computation. In addition to these requirements, the Las Cruces Public Schools administered other subtests including language arts, maps and diagrams, reference materials, social studies, and science.

In the 1996-97 school year, the test was administered to 3rd, 5th, and 8th grade bilingual students in mid March with regular students. The students' scores on the test were interpreted by comparing them with the performance of students participating in the norming study. New Mexico students are compared to a norming sample of students who attend schools in all of the border states as well as across the nation. In order to obtain standardized student achievement data for nation-wide comparison, the 1996-97 ITBS scores of each individual student were evaluated against 1994 (Form

K) norms. The ITBS scores for the Bilingual students are primarily used for instructional purposes and program modification.

SUMMARY REPORT FOR ITBS

In the 1996-97 school year, the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) was administered to 264 students participating in the bilingual education program, and 4,522 students in the regular program. Of 264 bilingual students, 113 were 3rd graders, 107 were 5th graders, and 44 were 8th graders. Of 4,522 students in the regular curricular program, 1,472 were 3rd graders, 1,555 were 5th graders, and 1,495 were 8th graders. Figures 1-3 present the results of ITBS for both bilingual and regular students in grades 3, 5 and 8 students.

Figure 1: 1996-97 ITBS Mean Composite Score of 3rd Grade Bilingual Students Compared with 3rd Grade Regular Students

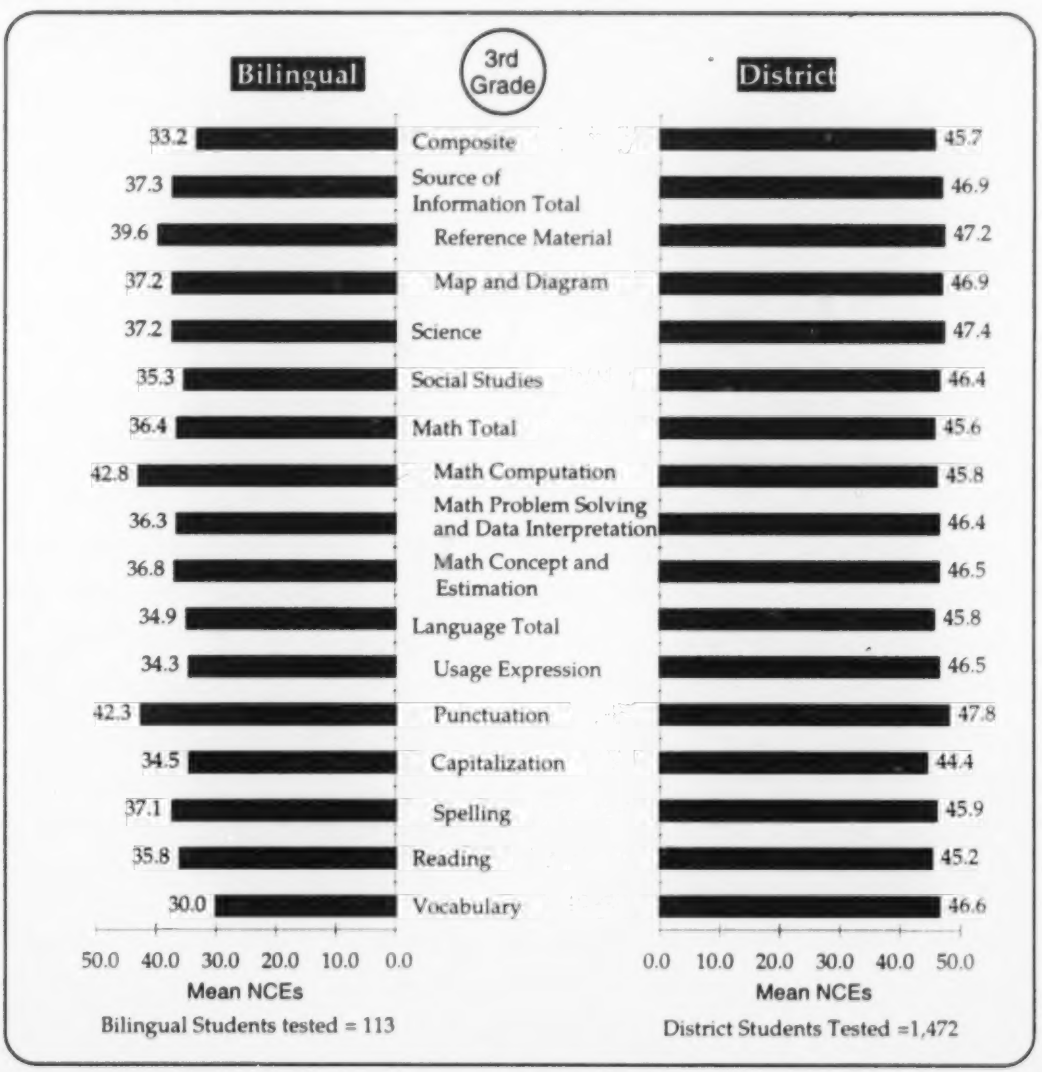


Figure 1 indicated that the mean composite score of 3rd grade bilingual students was 13 NCEs lower than that of regular students (33 NCEs for bilingual students and 46 NCEs for regular students). The analysis showed that the 1996-97 third grade regular students outperformed third grade bilingual students in all subject areas. Third grade bilingual students performed better in Math and Punctuation than other areas. The analysis suggested that the areas needing attention for third grade bilingual students included Vocabulary, Capitalization, Reading, Usage Expression, and Language.

Figure 2: 1996-97 ITBS Mean Composite Score of 5th Grade Bilingual Students Compared to 5th Grade Regular Students

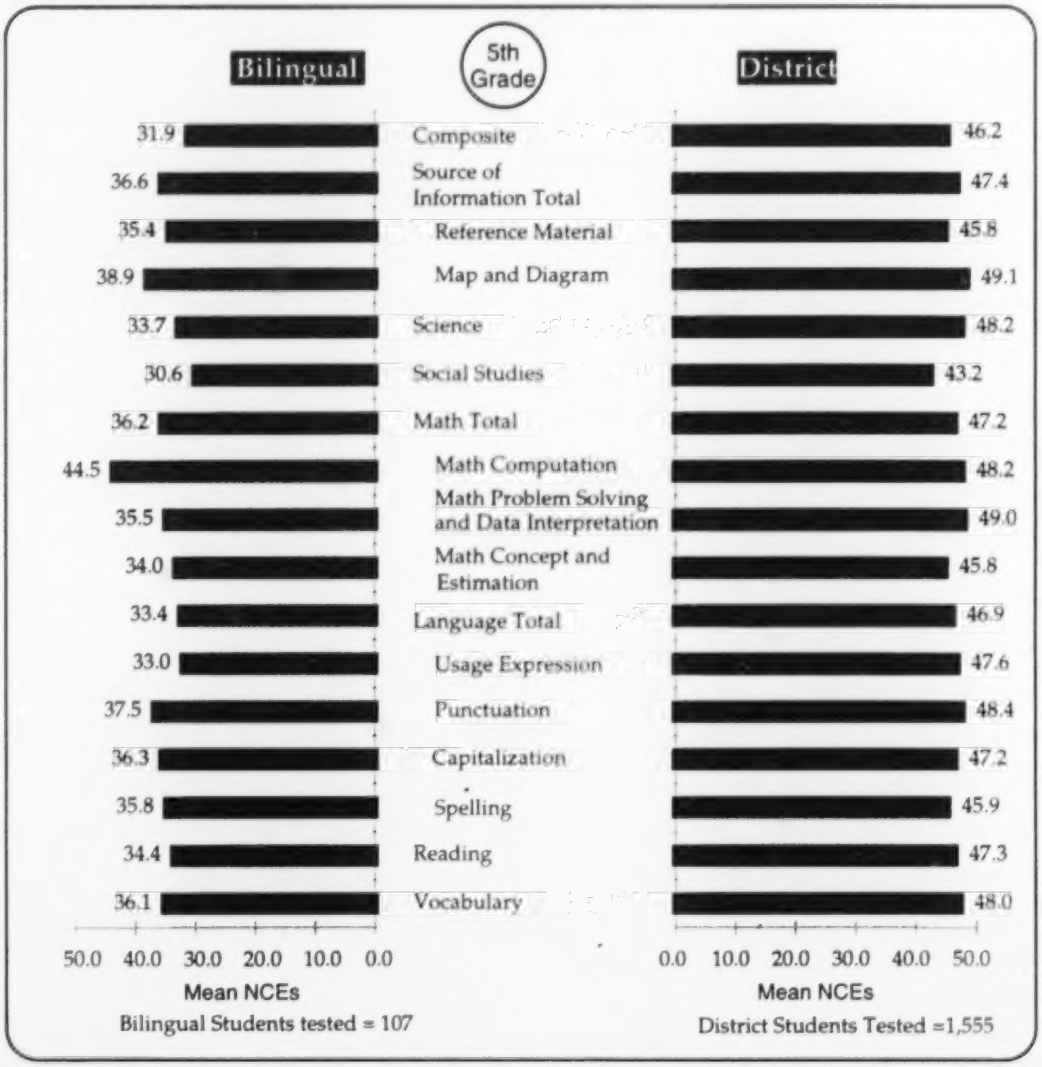


Figure 2 indicated that the mean composite score of 5th grade bilingual students was 14 NCEs lower than that of regular students (32 NCEs for bilingual students and 46 NCEs for regular students). The analysis showed that the 1996-97 fifth grade regular students outperformed fifth grade bilingual

students in all subject areas. Fifth grade bilingual students performed better in Math Computation than other areas. The analysis suggested that areas needing special attention for fifth grade bilingual students included Social Studies, Usage Expression, Language, Science, Math Concepts and Estimation, and Reading.

Figure 3: 1996-97 Mean Composite Score of 8th Grade Bilingual Students Compared with 8th Grade Regular Students

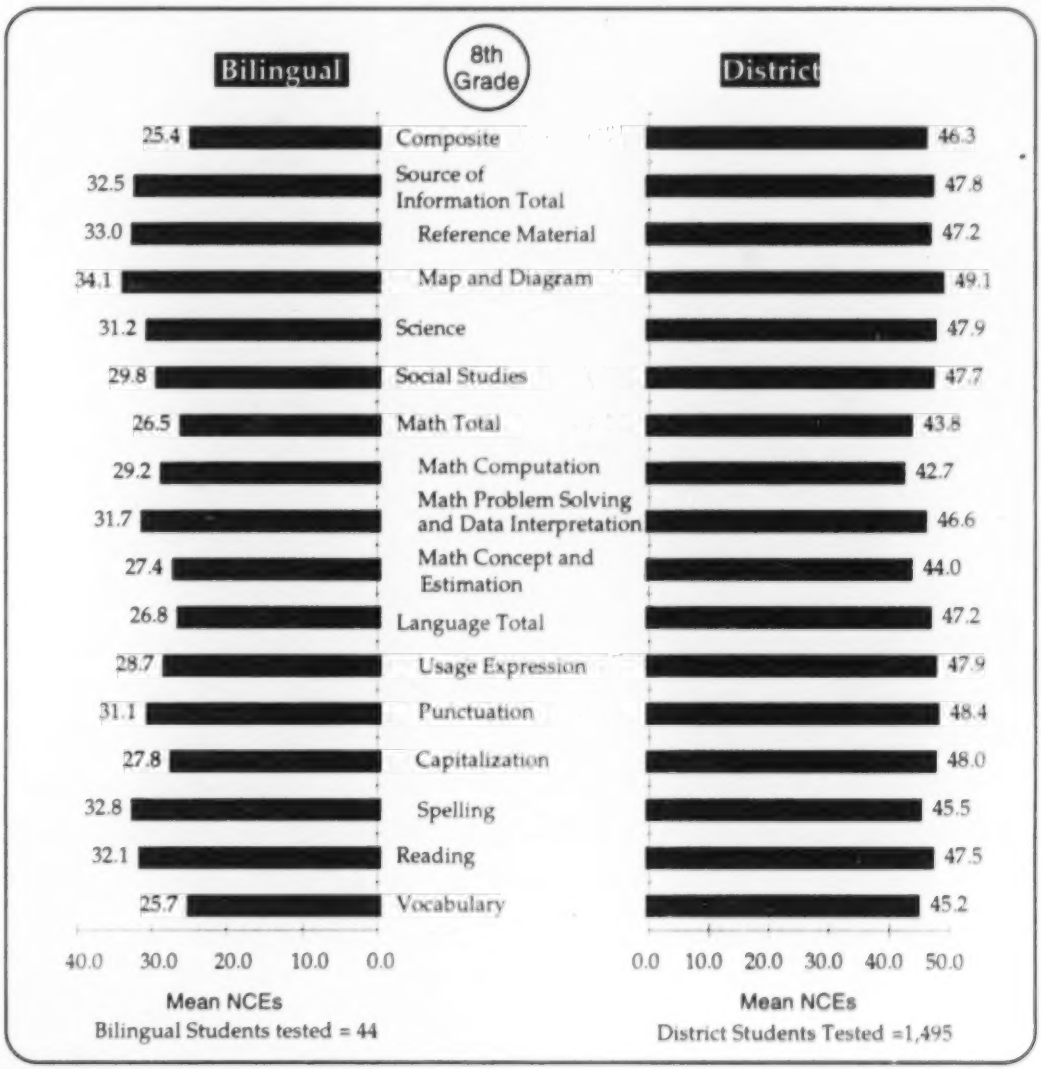


Figure 3 indicated that the mean composite score of 8th grade bilingual students was 21 NCEs lower than that of regular students in the same grade (25 NCEs for bilingual students and 46 NCEs for regular students). The analysis showed that the 1996-97 eighth grade regular students outperformed eighth grade bilingual students in all subject areas. The 1996-97 analysis on ITBS suggested that eighth grade bilingual students need special attention in all areas.

In conclusion, the analysis on the 1996-97 ITBS showed that the mean composite score of 3rd grade bilingual students (33 NCEs) was greater than that of 5th (32 NCEs) and 8th grade students (25 NCEs). Though the mean NCEs of the 3rd and 5th grade students was not high, they met the scores set in the objectives of the State Bilingual Application (32 NCEs).

LA PRUEBA DE REALIZACION

In 1996-97 school year, the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) Form K, a normed referenced test, was used to assess 3rd, 5th, and 8th grade students' academic achievement. It is mandatory by the New Mexico State Department of Education that all students in these three grades including bilingual/ESL students' academic achievement be measured by this instrument. Bilingual students whose primary language (Spanish) proficiency is superior to their English proficiency may be recommended to take La Prueba de Realización, Segunda Edición.

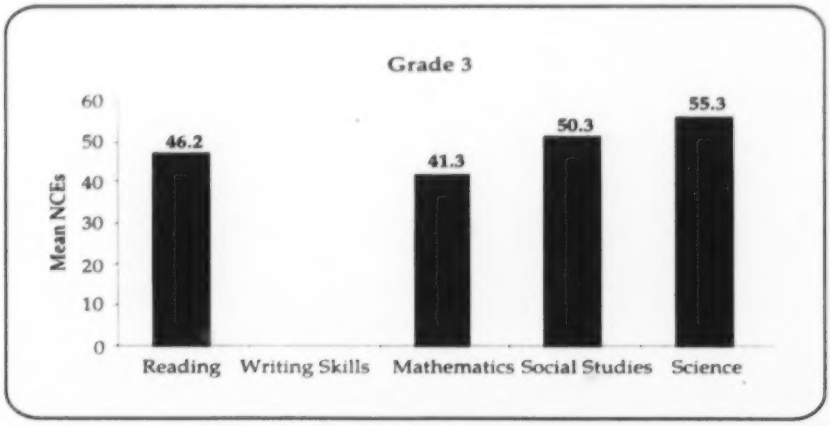
La Prueba de Realización, Segunda Edición, is intended to measure fundamental objectives in the school curriculum in the areas of reading, writing, mathematics, social studies, and science. The test is designed to produce reliable results in as short a testing time as possible.

As a Spanish-language test, the overall purpose of La Prueba is to assess the achievement of students whose primary language is Spanish. The degree to which students are literate in Spanish can be determined through the use of Spanish language tests in the same way that proficiency in English can be measured by English language tests.

SUMMARY REPORT FOR LA PRUEBA

In the 1996-97 school year, 143 third grade, 70 fifth grade, and 58 eighth grade bilingual students took La Prueba Tests. The results of each grade are summarized in Figures 4-6 respectively.

Figure 4: Mean NCEs of La Prueba Subtests for 1996-97 3rd Grade Bilingual Students



Third grade La Prueba consists of four subtests including Reading, Mathematics, Social Studies, and Science. The analysis (Figure 4) concluded that the highest mean NCEs was in Science (55 NCEs) and the lowest was in Mathematics (41 NCEs).

Figure 5: Mean NCEs of La Prueba Subtests for 1996-97 5th Grade Bilingual Students

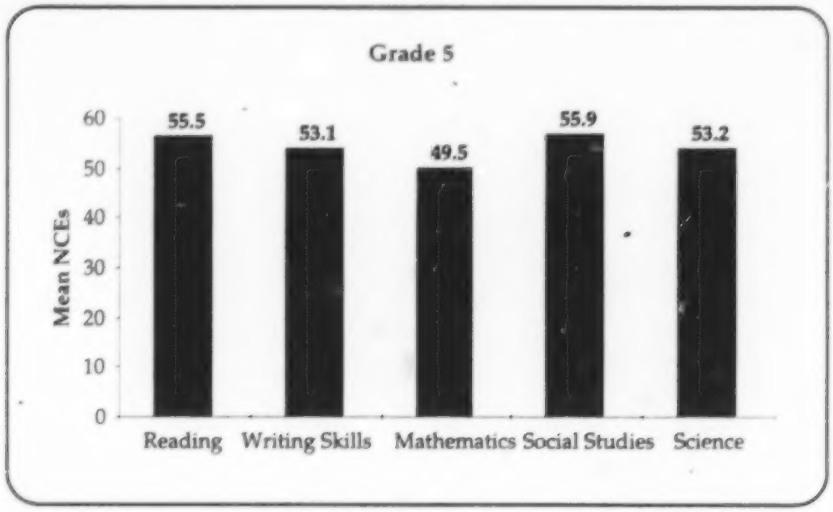


Figure 5 presents the mean NCEs of 70 fifth grade students taking the La Prueba test in the 1996-97 school year. The analysis indicated that 5th grade bilingual students performed well in all subtests. The highest mean NCEs was in Reading (56 NCEs) and the lowest was in Mathematics (50 NCEs).

Figure 6: Mean NCEs of La Prueba Subtests for 1996-97 8th Grade Bilingual Students

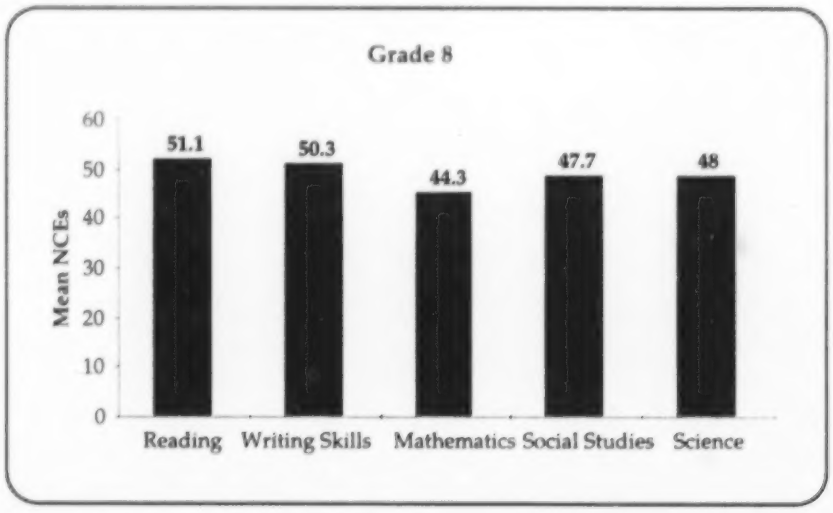


Figure 6 presents the mean NCEs of 58 eighth grade bilingual students taking the La Prueba test in the 1996-97 school year. The analysis indicated that eighth grade students do well in Spanish

Reading and Writing Skills. These results concurred with the results on the Spanish IPT Writing proficiency test. The mean NCEs for Reading and Writing were 51 and 50 respectively. The lowest mean NCEs were in Mathematics (44 NCEs).

NEW MEXICO HIGH SCHOOL COMPETENCY EXAMINATION

The New Mexico High School Competency Examination (NMHSCE) was developed to assess high school students' competencies in the areas of reading, language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, and writing. Beginning with the ninth grade class of 1986-87, under the New Mexico Public School Reform Act of 1986, New Mexico public schools students are required to pass the NMHSCE to receive a New Mexico public high school diploma. The examination was first administered to tenth grade students in February 1988.

Changes have been made in the NMHSCE to align the examination with the state Competency Frameworks, adopted in 1992. Some of these competencies are best assessed using constructed-response or open-ended items called performance assessment. Following three years of piloting such items to ensure their measurement quality, the Spring 1996 administration of the NMHSCE used a new form of the test. It contains two items in addition to the traditional multiple-choice items (130 items) for each subtest.

The five subtests, including reading, language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies, are five multiple-choice tests. These tests are computer-scored by an out-of-state contractor. Each subtest requires a scaled score of 150 or higher to pass. The writing composition, another subtest, is a direct writing assessment which requires students to write a multiple-paragraph persuasive composition. Three prompts or topics are presented and students may choose the one they want to write about. Each composition is holistically evaluated according to these criteria: Completeness, Organization, Development, Mechanics, and Coherency. The composition is then assigned a score which ranges from the lowest, 1.0, to the highest, 6.0. A score of 3 is required to pass the writing composition subtest.

Students, taking the test for the first time in the tenth grade, must pass all six subtests in order to receive a high school diploma. Sophomores who fail any part of the NMHSCE have another chance in their junior year and two chances in their senior year to successfully complete the exam before the graduation deadline.

SUMMARY FOR NMHSCE

In the 1996-97 school year, 11 out of 23 tenth grade bilingual students, and 1,073 out of 1,192 tenth grade regular students took the New Mexico High School Competency Examinations (NMHSCE). The results for both groups of students were concluded in Figure 7.

Figure 7: Percentage of 1996-97 Tenth Grade Bilingual and Regular Students Passing All Six Subtests in the First Attempt

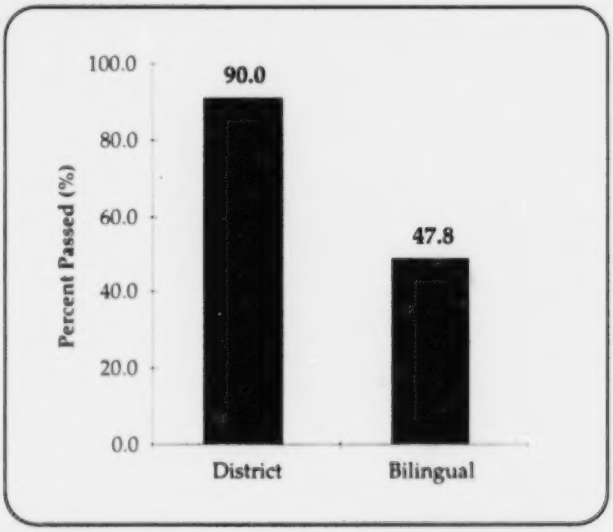


Figure 7 indicated that 90% of 10th grade regular students who took the NMHSCE passed all six subtests in the first attempt, while 48% of bilingual students in the same grade passed all six subtests in the first attempt.

NEW MEXICO PORTFOLIO WRITING ASSESSMENT

The Portfolio Writing Assessment, a performance-based assessment, is administered to all fourth and sixth grade students in New Mexico. A writing assessment was mandated by the Public School Reform Act (1986). Las Cruces Public Schools is in the forefront with authentic student assessment, having initiated a district-wide portfolio writing assessment for students in 1991-92. This assessment instrument is unique in two significant ways; it is an instructional tool designed to align with the curriculum, and it is an assessment of the student's ability to write over a period of time.

ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Early in the school year, the teachers of grades 4 and 6 are provided with three prompts and a guide which assists the writer in understanding the criteria for good writing. The teacher provides lessons for the class and each student writes on the assigned topic until both the teacher and the student are satisfied that the student's piece of writing demonstrates his/her best efforts. This is repeated with each prompt. Prewriting and drafts are stored in the student's portfolio for review and reflection. In the spring, the prompt selected for scoring by the State Department of Education is announced. The teacher and the student then work together to select the best piece of writing for transcribing onto a

scorable booklet. The student's writing is then scored based on two sets of rubrics, holistic rubrics and analytic rubrics. The score points for the holistic criteria range from 1 through 6, 6 being the highest score possible. The score points for the analytic rubrics range from 1 through 3 (lowest to highest) for each writing subskill including: Sentence Formation, Mechanics, Word Usage, and Development. This report presents the results of the holistic criteria. The analysis does not include the results of the students' writing by the analytic rubric.

HOLISTIC SCORING

Holistic scoring is a valuable tool to determine students' overall writing achievement. It is designed to provide a single score which indicates the level of writing quality for a written response.

In order to have scoring consistency, some broad scoring guidelines are considered when determining a respondent's score. The following questions are weighed when determining a respondent's holistic score.

How successfully does the response address the assigned topic?

Is the topic well-developed or merely a list of generalizations?

Is the response well-planned, organized, and coherent?

Is the language appropriate for the subject?

Do the mechanics impede the ability to communicate?

Using the New Mexico scoring criteria, each written response is read and evaluated by two independent readers who assign a holistic score using a six point scale of "1" to "6", with "6" being the highest possible score. When the two readers assign the same score, the score is printed on the score report along with a description of that score. Definitions of each score point can be found below.

Occasionally, the two readers will assign adjacent scores, for example, a "1" and a "2." When this occurs, the final score is an average of the two independent evaluations, a "1.5," to use the above example. This means that the response contained characteristics of both score points. The average score is printed on the score report.

INTERPRETATION OF HOLISTIC SCORE

Score 6: Effective opening and closing. Relates to the topic. Single focus. Well-developed. Organized and progress logically. Take compositional risks. Verbal sophistication. Variety of sentences with few or no errors in usage.

Score 5: Has an opening and a closing. Relates to the topic. Single focus. Key ideas developed with appropriate and varied details. Organized and progresses logically. Some risks may

be successfully taken. A sense of completeness and unity. Variety of sentences with few errors, usage, mechanics, and construction.

Score 4: Generally has an opening and a closing. Relates to the topic. Single focus. Development may be uneven with unelaborated details. Overall progression apparent. Avoids excessive monotony in syntax with few errors in sentence construction. May have some errors in usage and mechanics.

Score 3: May not have an opening and/or closing. Relates to the topic. Usually has single focus, may drift. Has specific details but little elaboration. May ramble and repeat ideas. Organizational flaws. Lacks transitions. Monotony in syntax with errors in usage and mechanics.

Score 2: May not have an opening and/or closing. Relates to the topic, drifts. Details are mixture of general and specific with little elaboration. Attempts at organization, but few transitions. Excessive monotony in syntax. Numerous errors in sentence construction. May have numerous or serious errors in usage and mechanics.

Score 1: May not have an opening and/or closing. Uncertain focus. Details general and may be random, inappropriate, or barely apparent. May show no series of planning. Sentences may be incoherent or unintelligible. May have severe problems with usage and mechanics.

Students' papers are scored using the above as general guidelines for a holistic score. In addition to the holistic score, which is the published score, the papers are scored in four analytic areas: Sentence Formation, Mechanics, Word Usage, and Development.

SUMMARY REPORT FOR PORTFOLIO WRITING ASSESSMENT

In the 1996-97 school year, 275 bilingual students and 3,001 regular students participated in the New Mexico Portfolio Writing. Of 275 bilingual students, 109 were fourth graders and 66 were sixth. Of 3,001 regular students 1,488 were 4th graders and 1,523 were 6th graders. The results for both bilingual and regular students were summarized in Figures 8 and 9 as follows:

Figure 8: Distribution of Holistic Scores for 1996-97 Fourth Grade Bilingual Students Compared with Fourth Grade Regular Students

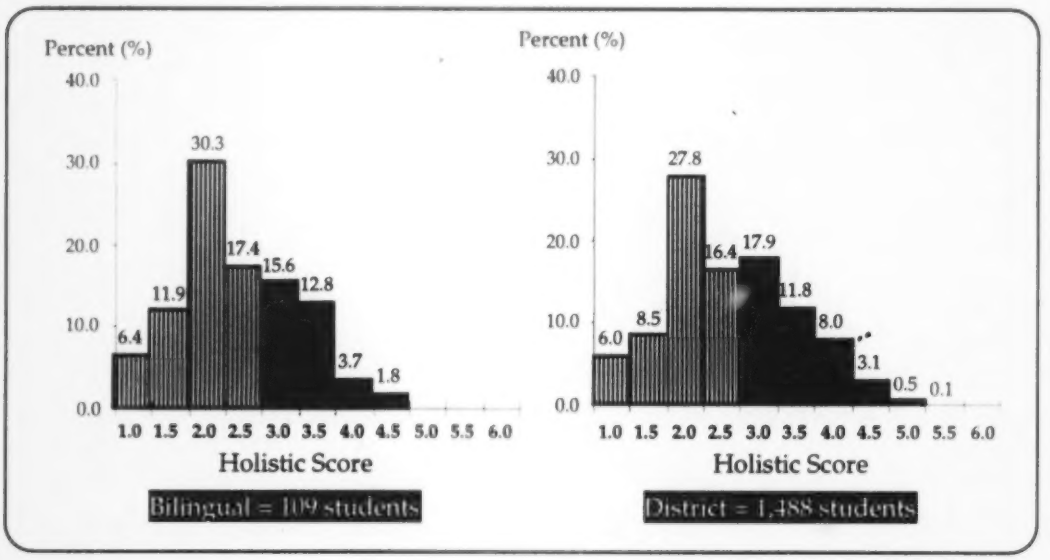


Figure 8 presents the results of holistic scores for 4th grade bilingual students and 4th grade regular students. The analysis on bilingual students' writing indicated that 34% of these students' writing was rated 3.0 or greater based on the holistic criteria. The analysis on 6th grade regular students' writing concluded that 41% of these students' writing was rated at least 3.0 or greater.

Figure 9: Distribution of Holistic Scores for 1996-97 Sixth Grade Bilingual Students Compared with Sixth Grade Regular Students

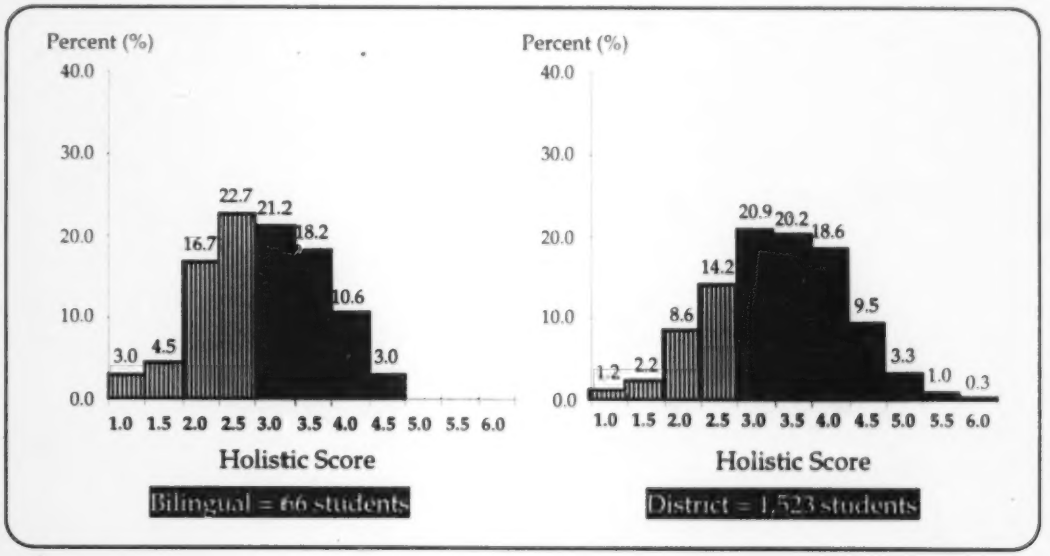


Figure 9 presents the results of holistic scores for 6th grade bilingual students and 6th grade regular students. The analysis on bilingual students' writing indicated that 53% of these students'

writing was rated 3.0 or greater based on the holistic criteria. The analysis on 6th grade regular students' writing found that 74% of these students' writing was rated at least 3.0 or greater.

To conclude, 7% of 4th grade regular students outperformed 4th grade bilingual students in the same grade in writing. For 6th grade students, 31% of regular students outperformed bilingual students in writing.

FIRST AND SECOND GRADE READING ASSESSMENT

In the Spring semester of each school year, all school districts in New Mexico are required to submit a Report of Students' Reading Achievement at grades 1 and 2 to the Assessment and Evaluation Unit of the State Department of Education. The report is a compilation of the actual number of students in grades 1 and 2 in the school district who have mastered each "essential competency" listed for each grade level. This school year, the Las Cruces School District chose the Informal Reading Assessment (IRA) as the tool to assess the competencies of these two groups of students.

All 1st and 2nd grade students, except bilingual/ESL students who were identified as Non-English Competent students and Special Education students whose IEP committee agreed to exempt them from the testing, were tested in the reading assessment. In the 1996-97 school year, 137 first grade and 168 second grade students in the bilingual/ESL programs were administered the IRA.

INFORMAL READING ASSESSMENT (IRA)

The IRA is an informal reading test designed to help discover the levels of reading material that students can read with and without teacher assistance. It can also help teachers diagnose some of their students' specific reading problems. The test is composed of two basic parts including graded word lists and graded passages.

Graded Word Lists. Two lists of twenty words from each reading level (preprimer, primer, first grade, second grade, third grade) are provided. These lists have three purposes. First, they can help the teacher make quick approximations of the reading levels of the student being tested. Second, they give the teacher an indication of the level at which the administration of the graded passages should be started. Third, the types of miscues made may give some insights into how the reader attacks words and into some of the word identification skills possessed.

Graded Passages. The IRA contains a series of carefully graded reading selections for all reading levels from preprimer through third grade. Each selection has been checked for difficulty using one of two well-known readability formulas and has been found to be at the designated level. Following each selection is a group of questions that are designed to measure many types of comprehension skills.

ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES

In the Las Cruces Public School, first and second grade teachers administered the IRA (both word list and graded passage) to their students individually in April. These teachers then used the information derived from the IRA to determine (1) their students' mastery in each State Essential Competency and (2) the developmental reading level of each student.

Following are the eleven State Essential Competencies for first grade students and thirteen for second grade students.

State Essential Competencies for 1st Grade

1. Reads basic sight vocabulary in context.
3. Decodes unfamiliar words through the use of phonetic skills.
5. Names the letters of the alphabet.
6. Recognizes lower and upper case letters.
7. Reads for meaning.
8. States items in sequence from context.
9. Follows two-step written directions.
10. States cause and effect from context.
11. Makes predictions from context.
12. Identifies the main character in literature.
14. Tells about the story in literature.

State Essential Competencies for 2nd Grade

1. Reads sight vocabulary in context.
2. Uses context clues in identifying unfamiliar words.
3. Decodes unfamiliar words through the use of phonetic skills.
4. Decodes unfamiliar words through the use of structural analysis skills.
5. Identifies the main idea and details from context.
6. States items in sequence.
7. States cause and effect.
10. Differentiates between fact and fantasy.
11. Makes predictions.
12. Follows three step written directions.
13. Describes characters in literature.
14. Describes setting in literature.
15. Reads and understands materials such as grade level textbooks, story books, dictionaries, labels, magazines, signs, recipes, and own writing.

The State also requires that these two groups of students' developmental reading levels be determined based on the scale given below.

STATE DEVELOPMENTAL READING SCALE

The reading competencies of first and second grade students are classified in three groups: Emergent Reader, Competent Reader and Fluent Reader. The information of each reader is described as follows:

Emergent Reader. "Plays at" or pretends to read; shows reading-like behaviors; makes up stories from pictures; memorizes text; uses left to right progression and top to bottom movement on the page; uses picture cues to predict text; reads predictable texts; recognizes some words; begins to develop phonetic understanding; reads word by word; knows letter-sound link; attempts finger-voice-text match; retells a story; uses expression; returns to favorite texts; requires assistance.

Competent Reader. Reads a simple story and retells it; uses picture cues for checking rather than predicting; knows many words; uses context clues to make predictions (semantic); uses decoding skills when needed; uses more than one skill to decode graphophonic, semantic syntactic; begins to use sampling, predicting, confirming, and self-correcting strategies; expands reading to a variety of materials; reads orally with fluency and expression with familiar texts; requires assistance at times.

Fluent Reader. Reads orally with fluency and expression in a variety of texts; chooses unfamiliar texts; sets purpose for reading and adjusts strategies as need arises; demonstrates knowledge of comprehension skills such as main idea, sequence, predicting outcomes and making inferences; uses increased knowledge of word analysis skills to confirm predictions; uses sampling, predicting, confirming, and self-correcting strategies independently; summarizes text for retelling; uses expression with meaning; needs little assistance.

SUMMARY REPORT ON READING ASSESSMENT

In the 1996-97 school year, 101 first grade bilingual students, 1,510 first grade regular students, 167 second grade bilingual students, and 1,601 second grade regular students were administered the Informal Reading Assessment (IRA). The results for bilingual and regular students in both grades were concluded in Figures 10 and 11 respectively.

Figure 10: Percentage of 1996-97 **First** Grade Bilingual and Regular Students Who Were Rated Emergent, Competent and Fluent Readers

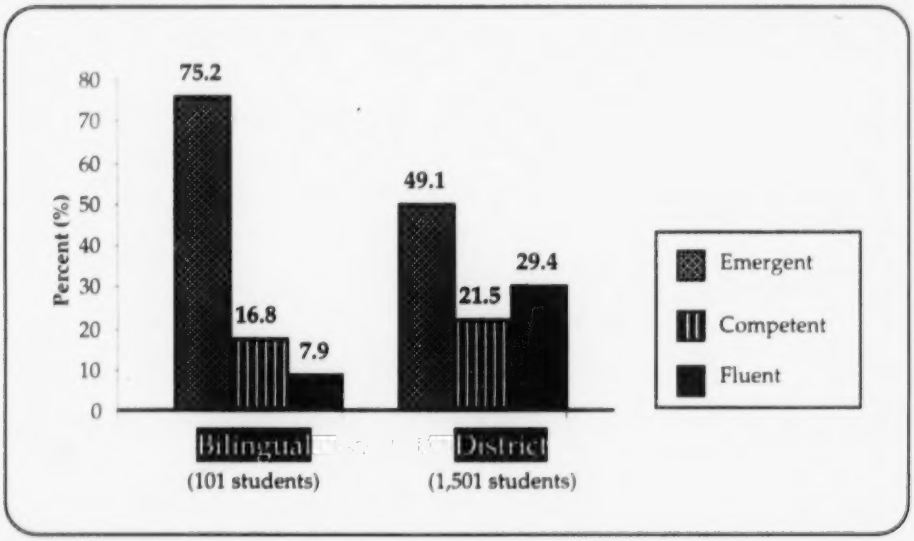


Figure 10 presents the reading competency of 101 first grade bilingual and 1,510 regular students who were administered the Informal Reading Assessment (IRA) at the end of 1996-97 school year. The analysis indicated that the percentage of first grade regular students who were rated competent readers exceeded bilingual students by 5%. The percentage of first grade regular students who were rated fluent readers was 21% greater than that of bilingual students.

Figure 11: Percentage of 1996-97 **Second** Grade Bilingual and Regular Students Who Were Rated Emergent, Competent and Fluent Readers

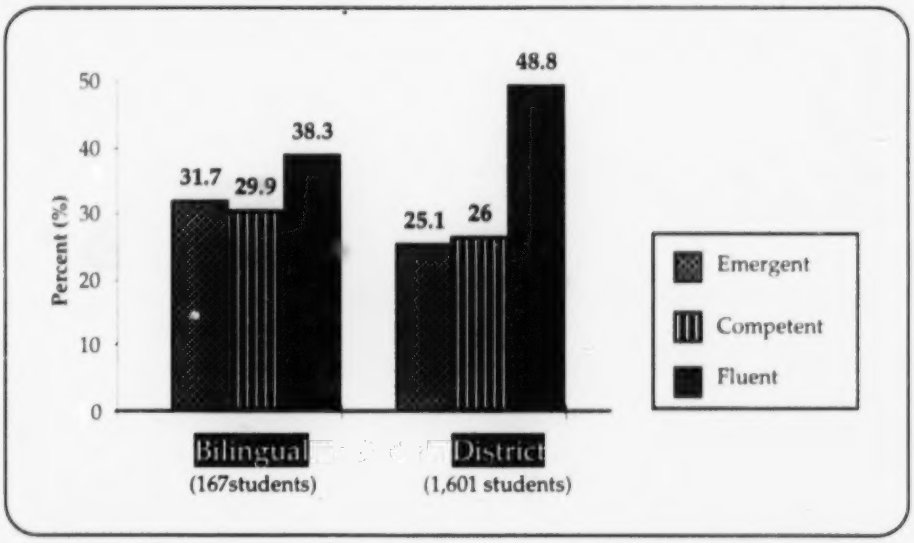


Figure 11 presents the reading competency of 167 second grade bilingual and 1,601 regular students who were administered the Informal Reading Assessment (IRA) at the end of 1996-97 school year. The analysis indicated that the percentage of second grade regular students who were rated competent readers exceeded bilingual students by 4%. The percentage of second grade regular students who were rated fluent readers was 11% greater than that of bilingual students.

RETENTION RATE OF BILINGUAL STUDENTS

This section presents the information on the retention rate of 1996-97 bilingual students compared to that of regular students. Of the district' s 19,676 students in grades K-12, 591 were retained. For bilingual students, the analysis indicated that out of 1,967 students in grades K-12, 72 were retained. Figure 12 presents the percentage of 1996-97 bilingual and regular students (grades K-12) who were retained. Table 1 presents the number of 1996-97 bilingual and regular students (grades K-12) who were retained.

Figure 12: 1996-97 Retention Rate of Bilingual Students Compared to Regular Students

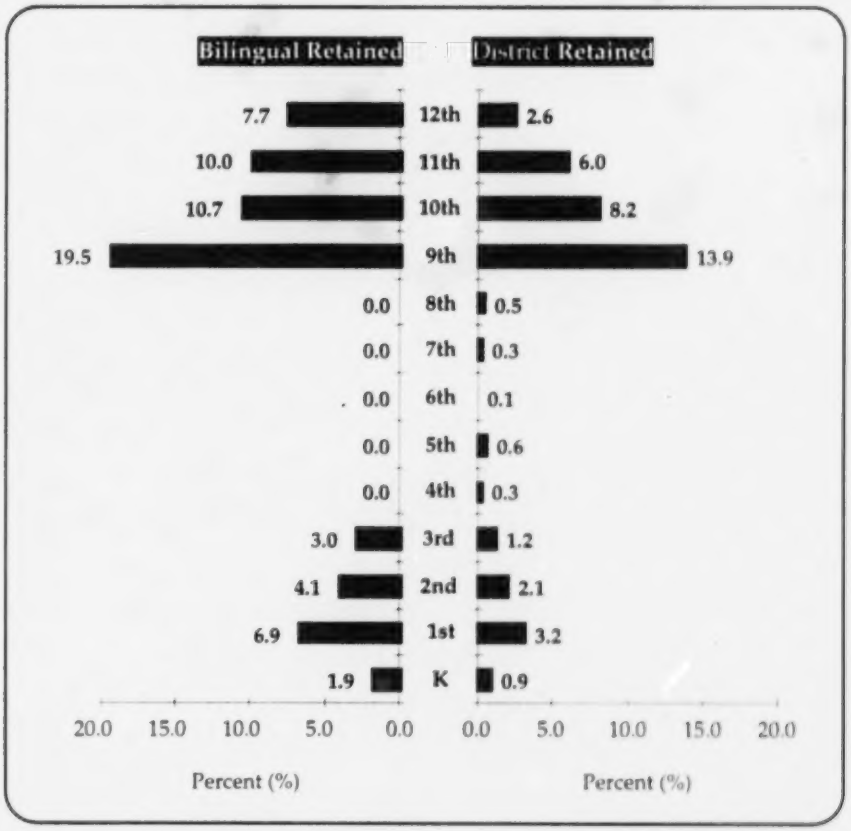


Table 1: Number of 1996-97 Bilingual and Regular Students at Each Grade Who Were Retained

Grade	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	TOTAL
District	14	53	36	19	5	10	2	5	8	230	117	63	29	591
Bilingual	6	20	11	7	0	0	0	0	0	15	6	4	3	72
TOTAL	**20**	**73**	**47**	**26**	**5**	**10**	**2**	**5**	**8**	**245**	**123**	**67**	**32**	**663**

Figure 12 and Table 1 indicated that the highest retention rate for both bilingual and regular students was in 9th grade. The percentage was 20% for bilingual students and 14% for regular students. The highest retention for both groups of students was at the high school level. No retention records were found in grades 4-8 bilingual students. For regular students, the lowest retention rate was also found in grades 4-8.

GRADE POINT AVERAGE OF BILINGUAL STUDENTS

This section presents the grade point average (GPA) of bilingual students in grades 6-12 in comparison to regular students in the same grades. The GPA of both groups of students was concluded in Figure 13.

Figure 13: Grade Point Average of Bilingual Students Compared to Regular Students

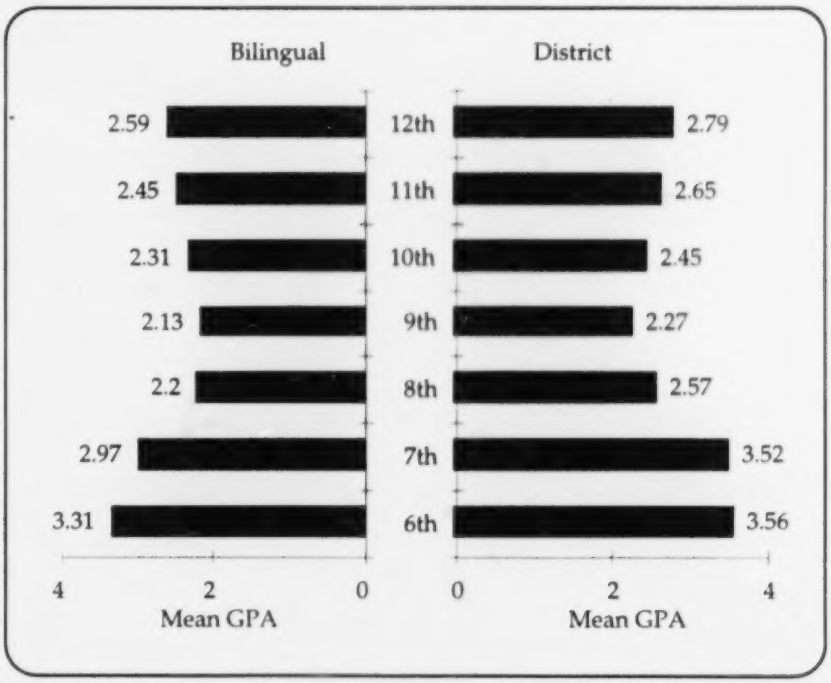
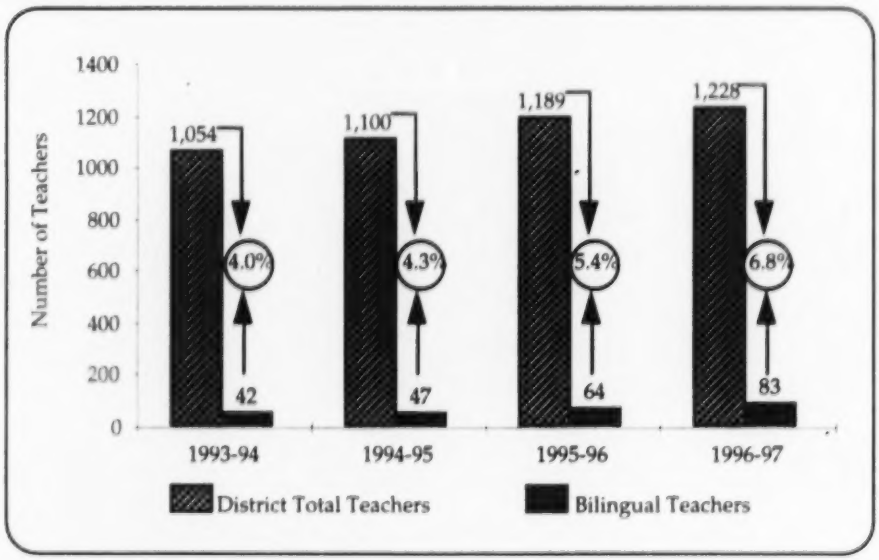


Figure 13 concluded that 6th grade bilingual and regular students received the highest GPA, while 9th grade students of both groups received the lowest GPA. For 6th grade students, the GPA was 3.31 for bilingual students and 3.56 for regular students. For 9th grade students, the GPA was 2.13 for bilingual students and 2.27 for regular students.

PREPARATION OF BILINGUAL TEACHERS

This section presents the analysis of three topics: the number of district's teachers in comparison to the number of teachers endorsed in bilingual education over the last four academic years (1993-94 to 1996-97); the ratio of bilingually endorsed teachers to bilingual students over the last four academic years, 1993-94 to 1996-97; and the Ratio of 1996-97 bilingual endorsed teachers to students. The analysis is concluded in Figures 14-16 respectively.

Figure 14: Number of Teachers Endorsed in Bilingual Education in Proportion to Number of District's Teachers



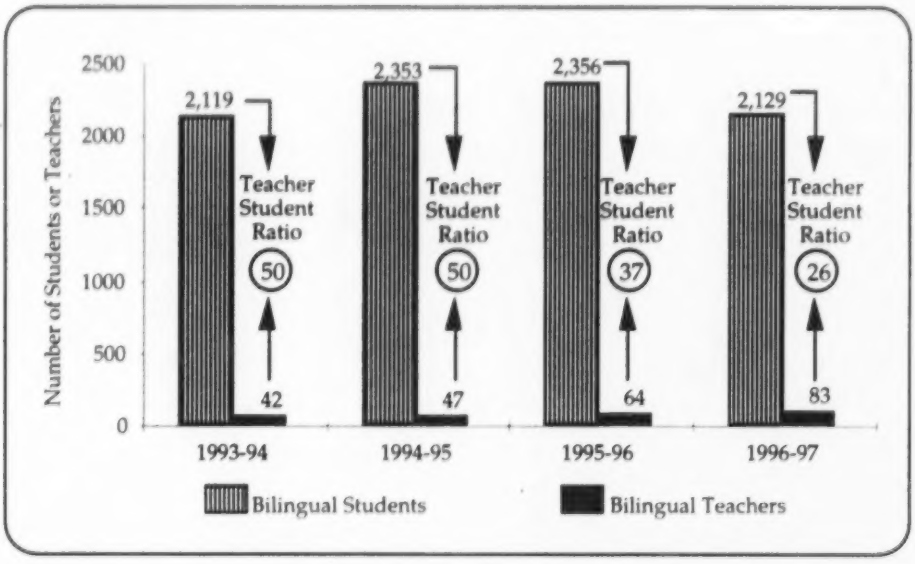
In the 1993/94 school year, the district's evaluation report for the Bilingual Education Program indicated that 2,119 students were identified as needing bilingual education services. Out of the district's 1,054 teachers, only 42 were bilingually endorsed. That is, only 4% of district's teachers were endorsed in bilingual education as presented in Figure 14. The ratio of bilingually endorsed teachers to students was 1: 50 as presented in Figure 15.

In 1994-95, the district hired 1,100 teachers. Of these, 47 teachers or 4% were endorsed in bilingual education as presented in Figure 14. The ratio of the teachers to students was 1: 50 as presented in Figure 15.

In 1995-96, the School Profile Report indicated that the district employed 1,189 teachers. Of these, 64 teachers were endorsed in bilingual education as presented in Figure 14. That is, 5% of the district's teachers were endorsed in bilingual education. The ratio of bilingually endorsed teachers to students was 1: 37 as presented in Figure 15.

In 1996-97, the district employed 1,228 teachers. Of these, 83 teachers were endorsed in bilingual education. The ratio of bilingually endorsed teachers to students was 1: 26 as presented in Figure 15.

Figure 15: Ratio of Teachers Endorsed in Bilingual Education to Bilingual Students (1993-94 to 1996-97 School Years)



In the 1996-97 school year, 21,690 students attended the Las Cruces Public Schools. Of these, 2,129 (10%) were identified as needing bilingual educational services: 1,553 (73%) were elementary students, 320 (15%) middle school students, and 256 (12%) high school students. Figure 16 presents the ratio of 1996-97 bilingually endorsed teachers to students classified by level (elementary, middle school and high school).

Figure 16: Ratio of Teachers Endorsed in Bilingual Education to Bilingual Students By Level, 1996-97 School Year

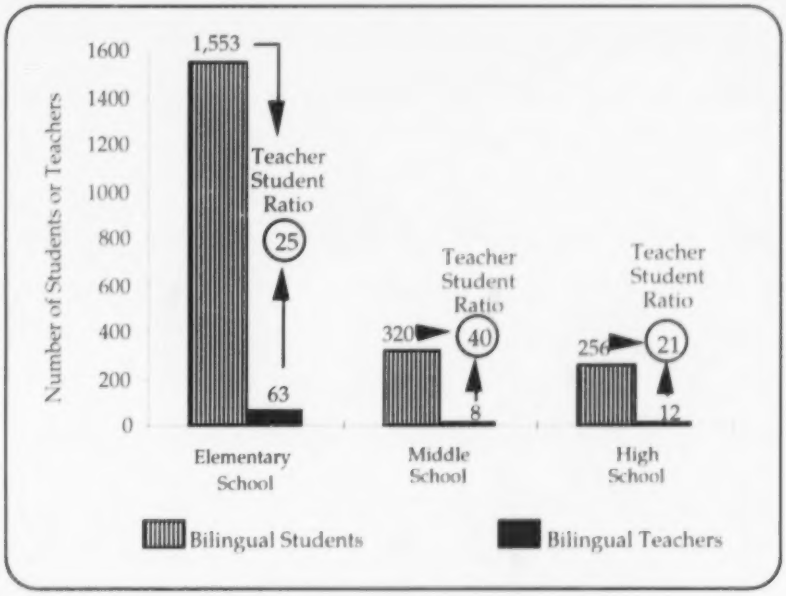


Figure 16 indicated that of 83 bilingually endorsed teachers in the 1996-97 school year, 63 were elementary school teachers, 8 were middle school teachers, and 12 high school teachers. The ratio of teachers to students was 1: 25 for elementary school level, 1: 40 for middle school level, and 1: 21 for high school students. The analysis also found that out of the district's 28 schools that had students needing bilingual education services, 26 had teachers endorsed in bilingual education. There were only two elementary schools that did not have endorsed teachers. However, both schools had two teachers working towards their endorsement in bilingual education. The schools that did not have enough staffing at every grade level had scheduled a block of time (45-60 minutes) daily for endorsed teachers in bilingual education to deliver instruction of Spanish literacy to bilingual students.

Additionally, the district hired nine resource people (bilingual education coordinator, language development specialists, reading specialists, diagnosticians) who were endorsed in bilingual education or TESOL to support the bilingual education programs.

The four year analysis (1993-94 to 1996-97) concluded that within three academic years, the district's endorsed teachers in bilingual education had increased by 99%. In other words, the district employed 41 more personnel who were endorsed in bilingual education to serve bilingual students.

In addition to certified teachers, the district employed 47 instructional assistants, 31 at the elementary schools and 16 at secondary schools. All instructional assistants were bilingual to varying degrees in English and Spanish and had at least a high school diploma. These educational assistants worked cooperatively with certified bilingual/ESL and sheltered instruction teachers in the 20

elementary schools, five middle schools, and three high schools, that had bilingual students. Their duties were to aid the classroom teachers in delivery of instruction, provide help in assessment, provide translation services when necessary, and in general support students' learning activities.

In the past few years, the district encountered a large increase in the LEP student population due to the proper use of language assessment. The district realized a need for bilingual education and TESOL endorsed teachers to serve the growing number of these students. Since then, the district has developed a plan to recruit and hire qualified teachers. Throughout each school year, the Department of Human Resources and Employee Relations sends its staff to the bilingual/multicultural education/ESL conferences held across the nation to recruit qualified teachers. In addition, the district has been training its staff through the Title VII fund and the district's operational fund. There have been nine teachers and eight educational assistants taking courses in bilingual education and ESL through the Title VII fund at New Mexico State University. Of these, one teacher has completed the degree in bilingual education and is teaching LEP students in an elementary school in the district. The rest will complete their course work within two or three years.

The operational fund has been provided to the district teachers who want to be endorsed in either bilingual education or TESOL. The educational assistants who have a degree other than education and are willing to obtain an endorsement in bilingual education or TESOL have also been encouraged and promoted to receive the training through this fund at New Mexico State University. All thirteen teachers and three out of four educational assistants under the operational fund completed the bilingual education or TESOL endorsements and are currently teaching language minority students in the district.

In addition to certified teachers and educational assistants, the Bilingual Education/ESL Program is supported by the program director, coordinator, and five language development specialists. The director is bilingual in English and Spanish and holds a master's degree. The coordinator holds a doctorate degree and is endorsed in TESOL. The duties of the coordinator includes supervision of program personnel, coordination of identification and placement of students, staff development, curriculum development, policy development, and overseeing instruction. All five specialists have Master's degrees in bilingual education or TESOL. Three are endorsed in bilingual education and two are endorsed in both areas. The specialists assist in the selection of testing instruments, providing in-service training to instructional staff, develop program handbooks, assist in development of curriculum materials, provide training, model teaching techniques and methods, and in general provide a variety of information to help classroom teachers with LEP students. Besides certified teachers, educational assistants, and program staff, LEP students at the secondary level are served by eight counselors who hold master's degrees and are bilingual in English and Spanish.

Apart from the aforementioned training, a number of in-service workshops were held by the Multicultural/Bilingual Education Department throughout the school year for the teachers and

educational assistants who worked with language minority students. The in-service training includes a wide array of topics relevant to the preparation and professional development of education personnel who serve language minority students. The training sessions include the following subjects.

1. Bilingual Education/ESL Methodologies and Techniques
2. Pragmatic Approaches of Teaching Content Reading to LEP Students
3. Spanish Literacy
4. Sheltered Instruction
5. Textbook/Materials Adaptation
6. Paraprofessional Training
7. State Bilingual/Multicultural Education Rules and Regulations
8. Second Language Acquisition
9. Bilingual/Multicultural Education Student Assessment and Evaluation
10. Cooperative Learning Strategies

Besides the in-house in-service training, the district has supported the Multicultural/Bilingual Education staff, the teachers, and educational assistants, who work with language minority students by allowing them to attend conferences relating to multicultural/bilingual education.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The analysis on academic assessments for 1996-97 bilingual students is concluded as follows:

1. Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS). The ITBS was given to 3rd, 5th and 8th grade regular students and bilingual students whose English proficiency is equal to or superior to their home language as measured by the IPT. The analysis concluded that the academic achievement of 1996-97 third, fifth and eighth grade bilingual students was below that of regular students as measured by the ITBS. The strongest area for 3rd and 5th grade bilingual students was Math Computation. The mean NCEs were 43 for 3rd grade and 45 for 5th grade. The next strongest area for 3rd grade was Punctuation (42 NCEs). Among the bilingual students in the three grades taking the 1996-97 ITBS, 3rd grade students seemed to outperform 5th and 8th grade students. The mean composite scores for 3rd grade were 33 NCEs for bilingual students and 46 NCEs for regular students. The mean composite score for 5th grade was 32 NCEs for bilingual students and 46 NCEs for regular students. The mean composite scores for 8th grade were 25 NCEs for bilingual students and 46 for regular students.

2. La Prueba Test. The La Prueba Test was administered to 3rd, 5th and 8th grade bilingual students whose home language proficiency is superior to English proficiency. The analysis for 3rd grade students concluded that the highest mean NCE score was in Science (55 NCEs) and the lowest was in Mathematics (41 NCEs). Fifth grade students seemed to perform well on all subtests. The mean NCEs ranked from 50-56 NCEs. The mean NCE scores of the bilingual students (3rd, 5th and 8th grade) who took the La Prueba Test were higher than that of those who took the ITBS. This could be because the students were given the test a grade lower than their actual grade. For example, 5th grade students were given the 4th grade test and 8th grade students were given the 7th grade test.

3. New Mexico High School Competency Examination (NMHSCE). The New Mexico High School Competency Examination was administered to grades 10-12 students. This report presents only the results of 10th grade students who took the English test for the first attempt. The analysis concluded that 90% of 10th grade regular students passed all six subtests in the first attempt, while 48% of bilingual students in the same grade passed all six subtest in the first attempt.

4. New Mexico Portfolio Writing Assessment. The New Mexico Portfolio Writing Assessment was administered to 4th and 6th grade regular students and bilingual students whose English proficiency is equal to or superior to their home language proficiency. The analysis concluded that regular students outperformed bilingual students in both grades.

5. First and Second Grade Reading Assessment. The Informal Reading Assessment was administered to first and second grade regular students and bilingual students who were fluent English Speakers (LAU C) as measured by the English IPT Oral. The analysis concluded that more regular

first grade students were rated competent and fluent readers than were bilingual students. The percentage of regular students who were rated competent and fluent readers was 22% and 29% respectively, while the percentage of bilingual students who were rated as fluent readers was 19% and 8% respectively.

For second grade students, it was concluded that the percentage of second grade regular students who were rated fluent readers was higher than that of bilingual students. However, more bilingual students were rated competent readers than regular students. The percentage was 30% for bilingual students and 26% for regular students.

6. Retention Rate of Bilingual Students. Of the district' s 19,676 students in grades K-12, 591 were retained. For bilingual students, the analysis indicated that out of 1,967 students in grades K-12, 72 were retained. The analysis concluded that the highest retention rate for both bilingual and regular students was in 9th grade. The percentage was 20% for bilingual students and 14% for regular students. The highest retention for both groups of students was at the high school level. No retention records were found for grades 4-8 bilingual students. For regular students, the lowest retention rate was also found in grades 4-8.

At the elementary level, first grade students seemed to have a higher retention rate than other grades. It could be that students are retained at first grade due to their reading ability. The attainment of literacy is a very developmental and individual process. Students with a print rich environment and that have been read to often acquire literacy skills sooner than students that have not been given that opportunity. Some students learn to read well by first grade and often by second grade. Perhaps teachers should examine the student's environment and literary experiences before deciding to retain a student.

This evaluation points out several issues that should be examined further or at best be addressed. Research previously has pointed out the disadvantages of retention and their correlation to the drop-out rate. The retention rates at first grade and ninth grade are elevated for bilingual and regular students.

Ninth grade students are in a transitional and often delicate stage in their development. Perhaps more support is needed from counselors, alternative programs or tutors or perhaps classes to help them in study or organizational skills.

7. Grade Point Average (GPA) of Bilingual Students. The grade point average (GPA) of bilingual students in grades 6-12 in comparison to regular students in the same grades was analyzed. The analysis concluded that 6th grade bilingual and regular students received the highest GPA, while 9th grade students of both groups received the lowest GPA. For 6th grade students, the GPA was 3.31 for bilingual students and 3.56 for regular students. For 9th grade students, the GPA was 2.13 for bilingual students and 2.27 for regular students. The GPA of ninth grade student drops

significantly and correlates with the retention rate. This evidences that this is a critical time in students' education and that perhaps more is needed.

8. Preparation of Bilingual Teachers. This section concludes the analysis of three topics: the number of district's teachers in comparison to the number of teachers endorsed in bilingual education over the last four academic years (1993-94 to 1996-97); the ratio of bilingually endorsed teachers to bilingual students over the last four academic years, 1993-94 to 1996-97; and the Ratio of 1996-97 bilingual endorsed teachers to students. The analysis is concluded in Figures 1-3 respectively.

Figure 1: Number of Teachers Endorsed in Bilingual Education in Proportion to Number of District's Teachers

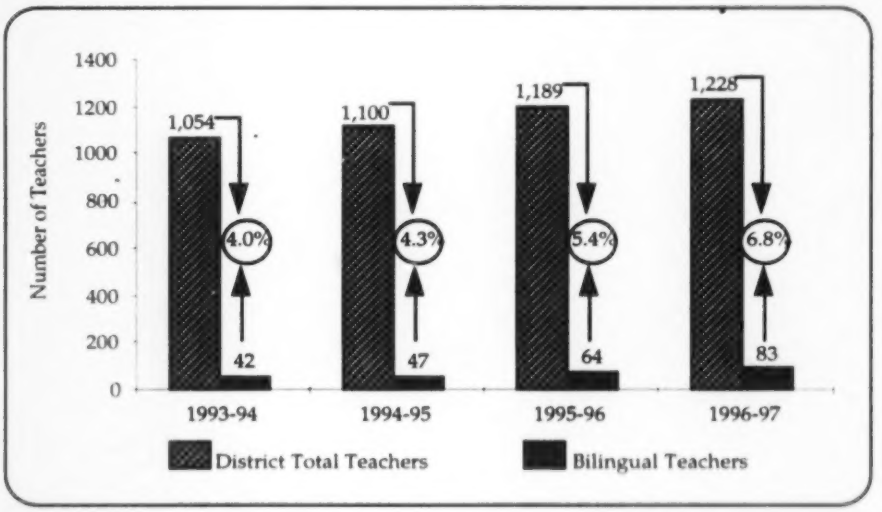


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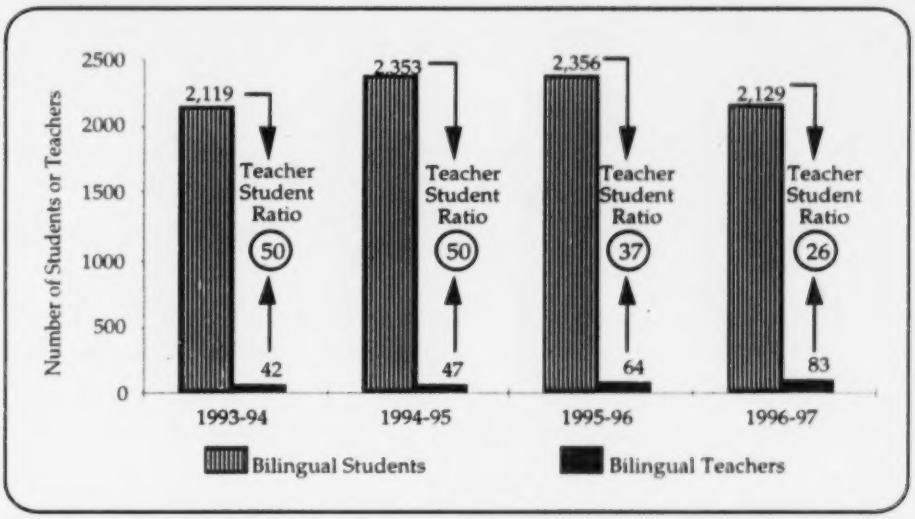
Figure 2: Ratio of Teachers Endorsed in Bilingual Education to Bilingual Students (1993-94 to 1996-97 School Years)



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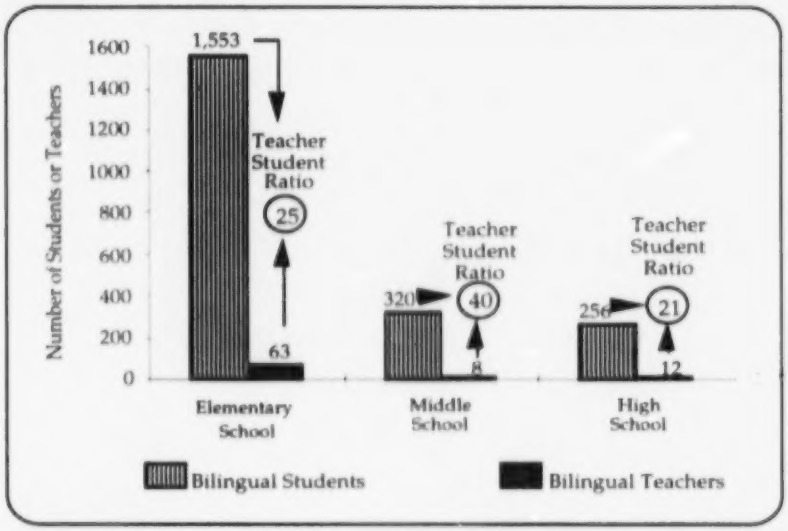

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